Department of Administration Employee Communications Plan

July, 2000

Goal: Ensure the exchange of accurate, timely, and useful information to facilitate effective communication among all employees, advancing the goals of the Department's Strategic Plan.

Plan Components

Face-to-Face Meetings

The Department Employee Communication Survey conducted in January and February of 2000 indicated that employees prefer to get timely and accurate information directly from their supervisors in "one-on-one meetings" (87%). Accordingly, the following directives have been instituted as a *minimum standard* to ensure that all employees have direct access to information.

- *Staff meetings* with direct reports held at least once a month or anytime there is a major personnel or policy change in the Division or Department. Staff will contribute to the meeting agenda and the meetings will be a forum for information update and open discussion.

- *Division meetings* held at least twice a year with Administrators and all employees. Employees indicated as part of the Survey "division meetings were helpful to them as a source of information" (91%).

- *Face to Face Meetings* with Director held periodically with employees. Survey results emphasized the request of such meetings by employees who agreed with the statement: "DOA Director and Administrators should spend more time talking 'face-to-face' with all employees" (85%).

Print Communications

Employees report they receive the department's many newsletters, including those available electronically and printed on paper. Overall readability was highest with the **Admin Weekly** with 54% employees surveyed indicating they read all of it and 25% scanning it for items of interest.

The **Administrator** (formerly Admin Update) received a 32% share of employees reading all of it, with 19% reading most of it or scanning for items of interest.

Employees responding to the survey offered suggestions to enhance the department's communication vehicles.

- *By October 1, 2000, Admin Weekly* will be improved to include the following employee suggestions:

    ➢ Will be **formatted** to provide for a listing, by **division,** of key activities by employees and work groups.

    ➢ Will **recognize** contributions of employees with introduction of *"Employee of the Week"* corner.

    ➢ Will **clarify technical terms** and will **broaden its scope** beyond the technical or IT projects within the department.

    ➢ Will include with the posting of Admin Weekly, a monthly **department wide calendar** emphasizing activities for employees, i.e., training opportunities, blood drives, major division/department meetings with employees. Calendar would be made available on the *Monday of the week preceding the new month.*

- *By October 1, 2000, Administrator* will be improved to include the following suggestions:

    ➢ Will emphasize **human-interest focus on individual employees and the jobs they do** and how their contributions impact the Department's achievement of strategic business goals and objectives.

    ➢ Will emphasize both **short and long-range goals** and strategic business direction of Department.

    ➢ Will more specifically define **department service roles** to agencies and department initiatives

Print Communications, *continued*

- *Admin Bulletin* will be issued on an **as needed basis** to announce specific policy and staffing changes or late-breaking information relative to overall Department operations. The *Bulletin* will be prepared for posting to the department's Intranet, *IdaWeb*, and employees will be notified by e-mail that the information is accessible.

  *In response to Survey findings, the **Admin Weekly;** the **Administrator**, and **Admin Bulletin are now posted electronically in PDF format to the department's Intranet website -IdaWeb.** Employees are notified through their email of the availability of the documents and are given the Intranet address.*

Following are specific recommendations as noted by employee survey verbatim comments to enhance the Department's other newsletters and on-line information resources:

- *InfoTech News* – (Prepared by Information Technology Resource Management Council)

  ➢ Define in greater detail where technology is taking the state in the future and how it will save the taxpayer money.

  ➢ More in-depth articles on IT matters.

  ➢ Increase publication frequency; send electronically.

- *Benefit Focus* – (Prepared by Office of Insurance Management-OIM)

  ➢ Provide employees tips on how to deal with Blue Shield

  ➢ Provide more information pertaining to retirement and insurance options and benefits to employees after retirement.

  ➢ Place on Internet.

  ➢ Provide a copy to new employees at orientation.

- *Risk Advisor* – (Prepared by Risk Management-OIM)

  ➢ Provide information on what services DOA provides under the risk management umbrella, and the services risk management offers to other agencies.

  ➢ Provide information on how risk management operates, how claims filed, paid, etc., how premiums determined.

  ➢ Provide ample copies to all employees.

Print Communications, *continued*

- *Federal Surplus Property News* – (Prepared by Div. of Purchasing)

    ➢ Verbatim comments were very few, but of the nine employees providing written comments, two said information was fine; one said leave information as is; one suggested placing newsletter on Internet; and five employees indicated they had no improvement suggestions; or topics they wanted covered.

- *EAP Advisor--* (Prepared by Office of Insurance Management)

    ➢ Employees generally receive *EAP Advisor* favorably. (77%) indicated they receive it, which is second only to the *Admin Weekly*, which is distributed electronically. Employees (78%) believe its quarterly issuance is frequent enough. Several employees suggested *EAP Advisor* is accessible electronically, as well.

Electronic Communications

Sixty-two percent of employees surveyed indicated they found the **Department of Administration Website** as "somewhat helpful". With the planned repackaging of services and information and graphic redesign of the website by Access Idaho staff, (completion date November 1) this percentage will improve.

- *Department of Administration Website*

    ➢ Re-design and revamp department's website to complement themes of accessidaho website.

    ➢ Incorporate digital photographs to illustrate pertinent Division activities.

    ➢ Encourage Divisions to post more materials, reports, studies and appropriate forms to department's website.

    ➢ Move toward full development of State of Idaho Intranet for use by all state agency departments.

- *accessidaho.com*

    ➢ Present favorable public image of Idaho Department of Administration, whenever appropriate, by posting news items of general public interest to accessidaho staff for inclusion on front page of accessidaho website.

Employee Feedback & Recognition

In collaboration with Department Program Managers, the Communications Manager and Human Resource Manager will continue to work together to identify feedback methods including periodic surveys, focus groups, on-line suggestion box, etc., to receive input from Department employees regarding issues of concern to them.

Employee Recognition activities, both formal and informal, will be broadened, enhanced or developed to acknowledge the professional contributions of employees in support of the Department's Mission and Goals.

Communication Coordinators

The Division Managers will appoint communication coordinators, to provide a link between department employees and the Communications Manager in the Director's Office.

- Names identified by October 1, 2000.

- Communication Coordinators will meet periodically to assist the Communications and Human Resource Managers in soliciting and developing ideas to enhance communication needs within the department for both electronic and written publications.

- Coordinators will encourage employee feedback on issues of concern.

- Coordinators will help develop informal and formal means to recognize outstanding employees; to help the Department celebrate its successes in meeting department business goals and objectives.

Department Commitment to Communication

To further emphasize the importance of internal communication, the Department of Administration will strive to create a leadership environment where all employees – not just managers – will exhibit leadership skills and qualities.

As a part of the Department's Strategic Plan, "Guiding Values" will be established to enable employees to be innovators and problem solvers, to serve customers better through their initiative.

To support the Employee Communication Plan and the Department's Commitment to Communication, human resource planning, selection and employee development, employee orientation will reflect these principles.

Department Commitment to Communication, *continued*

- A formal philosophy or commitment to communication will be developed and added to the "Guiding Values" of the Strategic Plan and will be reinforced by its prominent display in the Department's Policy and Procedures Manual/Handbook.

- Discussions about communication roles and responsibilities will be held during the orientation process for every new employee.

Performance Reviews

The new State of Idaho **Performance Management Program** reflects accountability for effective communications in its *Performance Standards* for all Supervisory/Management.

Those standards include:
- **Communications**
- Customer Focus
- Managing Performance
- Results Focus
- Work Environment/Safety

Performance management establishes a year-round partnership between employee and supervisor while creating a shared understanding about what is to be accomplished and how it is to be done. Continuous communication provides feedback and documentation to the employee about his or her work.

It remains the responsibility of each employee to take advantage of all the employee communication tools available to him or her.